REMARKS

Claims 1-49 are pending. Claim 20 has been amended to make it clear that the sol-gel fiber is a porous fiber. Support is found in the claims and specification as originally filed. No new matter is believed to be added.

The Applicants appreciate the allowance of Claims 7, 9-15, 17-19, 21, 22, and 25-49. The remaining claims are allowable over the cited reference for the reasons below.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Applicants acknowledge the anticipation rejection of Claims 1-4, 6, 8, 16 over Onorato. This rejection is traversed.

Onorato does not disclose or suggest the subject matter of the present claims, which requires a porous sol-gel fiber. Onorato has nothing to do with either a porous sol-gel fiber or a fiber. Instead, Onorato relates to *dense* glass articles, and more particularly *dense* glass optical fiber *connectors*. As the claims are drawn to porous sol-gel fibers and their production, and not dense fiber connectors, the claims are not anticipated by Onorato, and the rejection is unsustainable.

Onorato has nothing to do with porous sol-gel fibers. Indeed, Onorato teaches against colloid-derived glasses because of their larger pore sizes. Col. 1, lines 40-41. As his invention, Onorato discloses the formation of dense glass articles with particular near net shape qualities. See, e.g., the sentence bridging columns 1-2; col. 2, lines 35-37; col. 7, lines 33ff; and the claims. It should be evident that a dense article is not the same as a porous article.

To obtain his dense glass article, Onorato discloses a process in which 20 – 60 volume percent of the solvent is removed from the hydrolysis solution prior to transferring it into the mold. This is step two throughout the Onorato reference. In the method under the present claims, there is no such solvent removal step. The claims recite that the hydrolyzed solution is formed, and the hydrolyzed solution is transferred into the cavity of the mold. The method of the present claims results in a porous sol-gel fiber, but Onorato's method results in a dense glass article.

Onorato does not disclose making a fiber. Rather, the Onorato reference teaches making a fiber *connector*. Col. 5, lines 40-45. It should be evident that a fiber is not the same as a connector. For this reason, and those given above, the claims are not anticipated by Onorato, and the rejection should be withdrawn as unsustainable.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

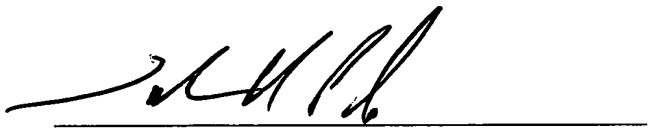
The Applicants acknowledge the obviousness rejection of Claims 1-4, 6, 8, 16 over Onorato. This rejection is traversed.

Onorato discloses only dense glass articles. Indeed, Oronato teaches against porous articles; it provides no motivation to seek out a porous sol-gel fiber; and it provides no expectation of success even if one were so motivated. Since Onorato does not mention porous sol-gel fibers, fibers, or any process for making same, one reviewing Onorato would not be in possession of all the limitations of the claims. For these reasons, the claimed subject matter is not made obvious by the Onorato reference. The obviousness rejection is unsustainable, and it should be withdrawn.

The Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for immediate allowance, and an early notice of such action is kindly requested. Should the Examiner have any suggestions to place the application into even better condition for allowance, he is kindly invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

DLA PIPER RUDNICK GRAY CARY US LLP



John K. Pike, Ph.D.
Registration No. 41,253

1200 Nineteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-2412
Telephone No. (202) 861-3900
Facsimile No. (202) 223-2085